

Members

Sen. Robert Jackman, Chairperson
Sen. Ron Alting
Sen. Allie Craycraft
Sen. Timothy Lanane
Rep. Cleo Duncan
Rep. Eric Gutwein
Rep. Linda Lawson
Rep. Dan Stevenson



RAIL CORRIDOR SAFETY COMMITTEE

Legislative Services Agency
200 West Washington Street, Suite 301
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2789
Tel: (317) 233-0696 Fax: (317) 232-2554

LSA Staff:

James Sperlik, Fiscal Analyst for the Committee
Francine Rowley, Attorney for the Committee

Authority: P.L. 28-2000

MEETING MINUTES¹

Meeting Date: September 27, 2006
Meeting Time: 10:00 A.M.
Meeting Place: State House, 200 W. Washington St.,
Room 431
Meeting City: Indianapolis, Indiana
Meeting Number: 1

Members Present: Sen. Robert Jackman, Chairperson; Sen. Ron Alting; Sen. Allie Craycraft; Sen. Timothy Lanane; Rep. Cleo Duncan; Rep. Eric Gutwein; Rep. Linda Lawson; Rep. Dan Stevenson.

Members Absent: None.

The Chair, Senator Robert Jackman, called the first meeting of the Rail Corridor Safety Committee (RCSC) to order at 10:10 a.m. Senator Jackman introduced the RCSC members and the Legislative Services Agency staff.

Senator Jackman provided background information to the Committee about the Shelbyville-to-Lawrenceburg rail line and its role in bringing the Honda automotive plant to Greensburg. (See Exhibit A)

The Chair called upon Mr. Tom Beck, Director of the Rail Division for the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT). Mr. Beck provided the Committee with an update on the Rail Grade Crossing Improvement Fund (RGCIF). (The Power Point presentation of Mr. Beck can be found in Exhibit B, Rail Grade Crossing Fund.) Mr. Beck told the Committee that the legislature first provided funds in 1997. Approximately \$3 M have been spent to date. Railroads and local communities are eligible to receive money from the RGCIF. Mr. Beck told the Committee that Indiana ranked 2nd in the nation in at-grade crashes in 2005, with 160. For the same year, Indiana ranked 2nd in fatalities with 21, and they ranked 14th in injuries with 25. Mr. Beck said

¹ Exhibits and other materials referenced in these minutes can be inspected and copied in the Legislative Information Center in Room 230 of the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. Requests for copies may be mailed to the Legislative Information Center, Legislative Services Agency, 200 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2789. A fee of \$0.15 per page and mailing costs will be charged for copies. These minutes are also available on the Internet at the General Assembly homepage. The URL address of the General Assembly homepage is <http://www.in.gov/legislative/>. No fee is charged for viewing, downloading, or printing minutes from the Internet.

that Indiana has 6,058 public crossings in the state, which ranks them 6th in the nation.

Mr. Tom Fruechtenicht, representing the Indiana Rail Transportation Group (IRTG), addressed the Committee. He said that the IRTG represents Class 1, 2, and 3 railroads, and since 1950 approximately 3,260 miles of rail have been abandoned in Indiana. Mr.

Fruechtenicht said that 94% of all grade crossing accidents are the result of motorist error, mainly drivers trying to beat a train across the track.

Ms. Cathy Hale, representing the IRTG, summarized the Railway-Highway Crossings Program. (This summary is contained in Exhibit C, Indiana Railroad Transportation Group - Key Shortline Issues.) Contained in this exhibit are rail transportation facts, along with funding needs of shortline railroads. Ms. Hale concluded her presentation with recommendations on how the legislature could help with funding. (These recommendations can be found in Exhibit C.) Lastly, Ms. Hale distributed a folder, Exhibit D, which contains information about railroad service in Indiana.

Senator Jackman called upon Mr. Tom Kinser of Indiana Operation Lifesaver. Mr. Kinser gave a brief overview of Indiana Operation Lifesaver and how long it has been in existence. Mr. Kinser used Exhibit E, Indiana Operation Lifesaver 2006 Question and Answer Primer, for his presentation. In his presentation, Mr. Kinser said that some of the data contained in Exhibit E differs from that used by INDOT because his data include private-public grade crossings. Mr. Kinser said that Operation Lifesaver was established by the Union Pacific Railroad in 1972. Mr. Kinser said that according to national data provided by the Federal Railroad Administration, there were 355 people killed and another 970 injured in 3,010 vehicle-train accidents. He said that a vehicle and train collide somewhere in the United States approximately every 115 minutes. Mr. Kinser said that a motorist is 40 times more likely to die in a vehicle-train crash than in any other type of highway accident.

After the presentations, committee discussion included: (1) raising the fine for safety violators and (2) possibly drafting legislation that would allow judges to reduce fines of violators if the violator participates in the Operation Lifesaver program and have the fee charged go directly to the program (somewhat like a court-administered program).

Senator Jackman said that this would be the only meeting this interim for the RCSC and adjourned the meeting at 11:25 a.m.